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December 20, 2022

Hon. Steven Guilbeault
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Canada
Government of Canada

Dear Steven Guilbeault:

Re: NWMB decision on the proposed amendments to the List of Species under the *Species at Risk Act*

NWMB Decision

At the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB or Board) Regular Meeting (RM004-2022) on November 30, 2022, Environment and Climate Change Canada requested an NWMB decision on the proposed amendments to the List of Species under the *Species at Risk Act* (SARA). The NWMB considered this request at its In-Camera Meeting (IC004-2022) on November 30, 2022, where the Board made the following decisions:

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 5.2.34(f) of the Nunavut Agreement, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board approves the downlisting of Barn Swallow from Threatened to Special Concern under the Federal Species at Risk Act.

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 5.2.34(f) of the Nunavut Agreement, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board approves the listing of Lesser Yellowlegs as Threatened under the Federal Species at Risk Act.

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 5.2.34(f) of the Nunavut Agreement, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board approves the downlisting of Red Knot rufa (Northeastern South America wintering population) from Threatened to Special Concern under the Federal Species at Risk Act.

RESOLVED that, pursuant to Section 5.2.34(f) of the Nunavut Agreement, the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board approves the uplisting of Red Knot rufa (Southeastern USA/Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean wintering population) from Threatened to Endangered under the Federal Species at Risk Act.



The Board noted that generally very few Nunavut hunters and trappers organizations respond to consultations about species listing. The Board recommends that consultation materials sent to hunters and trappers organizations should be easy to understand. Most hunters and trappers organizations have limited capacity and it may require some persistence and patience to receive a response from them. Detailed information on the species including Inuktitut names should be provided and attempts should be made to reach out to harvesters in affected communities, who typically have the most up-to-date information.

Barn swallow

The Board approved the downlisting of barn swallow from threatened to special concern based on the Committee Report, which indicated that their abundance has been stable in Canada over the last three generations. However, they still face threats from declining populations of insect prey, increasing frequency of severe temperature fluctuations during spring migration and the breeding season, and loss of suitable nesting sites in some regions. Although Nunavut is outside the typical breeding range for barn swallow, they have been documented in the same areas year after year and as far north as Bathurst Island.

Lesser yellowlegs

The Board approved the listing of lesser yellowlegs as threatened based on the COSEWIC report that indicated there have been long-term declines, continuing threats, and uncertainty in the estimates of trends of abundance. Substantial long-term declines in abundance are congruent with the Board members' lived experience, where they have observed declines in the abundance of lesser yellowlegs. Lesser yellowlegs also face threats that are likely to become more pervasive or unlikely to cease, including loss of wetland and intertidal habitat used on migration and in winter range, increased risk of drought in breeding areas, coastal flooding and greater severity of hurricanes during fall migration due to climate change, and hunting for sport and subsistence in South America.



JUL 24 2023

Mr. Daniel Shewchuk
Chairperson
Nunavut Wildlife Management Board
P.O. Box 1379
Iqaluit NU X0A 0H0



Dear Mr. Shewchuk:

Thank you for your letter of December 20, 2022, in which you present the decisions of the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board on the listing proposals of seven wildlife species of birds under Schedule 1 (the List) to the *Species at Risk Act*. These decisions support the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada's assessments, and are as follows:

- Downlisting of Barn Swallow from threatened to special concern;
- Listing of Lesser Yellowlegs as threatened;
- Downlisting of the Red Knot *rufa* Northeastern South America wintering population from threatened to special concern;
- Uplisting of Red Knot *rufa* Southeastern USA/Gulf of Mexico/Caribbean wintering population from threatened to endangered;
- Uplisting of Ross's Gull from threatened to endangered;
- Uplisting of the Short-eared Owl from special concern to threatened; and
- Delisting of Red Knot *islandica* from the List.

I appreciate the time and care with which the Board considered the situations of these wildlife species, arriving at the decisions to accept these proposals. I am pleased to accept the Board's decisions. I acknowledge that the Board also considered the proposal of downlisting the Canada Warbler from threatened to special concern, electing not to make a decision for this species.

This completes the decision-making process under Article 5 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement. Over the coming months, I will take steps to implement the proposed status changes in my recommendations to the Governor in Council.

I note the Board recommendations regarding an Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit study of migratory birds in Nunavut, and for their improved monitoring. I also note the Board's recommendation regarding Environment and Climate Change Canada's approach to consultation with hunters and trappers organizations. I have shared these with the appropriate departmental officials for their consideration.

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I read with interest the observations of Board members regarding the long-term declines in the abundance of Lesser Yellowlegs.

Should the Governor in Council accept my recommendations and decide to make some or all of the changes to the List, Environment and Climate Change Canada officials will work collaboratively with the Board to develop recovery strategies for the Lesser Yellowlegs and the Short-eared Owl as well as management plans for the Barn Swallow, and the Red Knot *rufa* Northeastern South America wintering population.

Please accept my best regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steven Guilbeault", written in a cursive style.

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P. (il/lui/he/him)